



By FOFJ STAFF

4th International Degrowth Conference

Photo credit: Eva Mahnke (CC BY-SA)



Photo credit: Eva Mahnke (CC BY-SA)



The 4th International Degrowth Conference took place in Leipzig September 2 to September 6, 2014. More than 2,500 people came to the Eastern German metropolis in order to discuss the potential of life beyond a growth-based economic system. In the spotlight of the conference was the necessity to develop alternative pathways to an ever-accelerating, destructive consumerism.

Among the issues debated were the psychology of growth, the impacts of resource extractivism, and the need for more sustainable food systems. Leipzig University was an able host to the diverse community of scholars and activists that made up the bulk of conference attendees. Contributors were Nnimmo Bassey (Friends of the Earth), Alberto Acosta (economist and former Minister of Mining in Ecuador, co-creator of the Yasuní Initiative),

Harald Welzer (social psychologist), Naomi Klein (journalist), Hartmut Rosa (sociologist), and many more. The conference was lined with art projects, manifold podiums and presentations, and a people's kitchen (*Volksküche*) with affordable, fresh vegan food. The closing day saw a demonstration for a more sustainable alternative to the dominant, growth-based capitalist system.

Interestingly, one of the major lines of debates was between advocacy groups of the Global South and the Degrowth "core" movement made up by environmentalists from the Global North. People from Southern countries repeatedly insisted that their countries needed growth in order to tackle poverty and strengthen development, while acknowledging the severe shortcomings of the current development models. The Degrowth Movement will have to show whether the conference was an all-time "peak" or if the idea of Degrowth will continue to open up intellectual spaces for a better world.

Web resource

<http://www.degrowth.de>

Ebola and food security

In 2014, the Ebola fever epidemic in Western African states (mainly Guinea, Liberia, Sierra Leone) made international headlines. Fear of an international pandemic impossible to control dominated the headlines. Attention of Western audiences peaked when the first case of Ebola infection was diagnosed within the US. At the beginning of March, around 23,900 people have been infected by the current epidemic, of whom about 10,000 have died, according to the WHO.

Largely underreported was the impact of the Ebola outbreak on the regional status of food security. Ebola has resulted in a serious shock to food systems, as the epidemic has impaired food markets and agricultural productivity. Collective farming was abandoned because farmers were afraid of in-

fection; borders were closed, hindering food trade. The international community is currently accessing the situation as the epidemic seems to have come under control. Now, the affected countries need to be rebuilt, including health systems and agriculture.

Photo credits: ©EC/ECHO/Cyprien Fabre (BY-ND)



Sierra Leone: into the Ebola epicentre

Source

Deutsche Welle, Is increased media attention on Ebola translating into more donations? (2015 March 09) Retrieved from <http://www.dw.de/is-increased-media-attention-on-ebola-translating-into-more-donations/a-17995803>

WHO, Ebola Situation Report - 4 March 2015 (2015 March 09), Retrieved from <http://apps.who.int/ebola/current-situation/ebola-situation-report-4-march-2015>

SciDev.Net, Ebola worsens food crisis in West Africa, (2015 March 09), Retrieved from <http://www.scidev.net/global/food-security/news/ebola-food-crisis-west-africa.html>

Mali: "Agroecology is in our hands! We are building it further together!" - Opening of the International Agroecology Forum

Sélingué, 24 February 2015 – In Mali, more than 250 delegates came together for the first International Forum on Agroecology hosted by Confederation of Peasants Organizations of Mali (CNOP) and La Via Campesina, at the Nyéléni Center in Sélingué, south Mali. They were women and men, from diverse constituencies, among

them farmers, fisherfolks, indigenous people, pastoralists and urban consumers from all corners of the world, arrived to the centre in buses from Bamako and other regions of Mali.

"I decided to come here because we are building a necessary movement, that will claim back what was always ours: our peasant knowledge of doing agriculture", said a woman farmer from Mali, as she was running to attend the women caucus.

The Forum opened with a warm welcome to the participants by Ibrahima Coulibaly, the president of the CNOP, who explained the reason why such a forum was taking place now. According to Coulibaly, in spite of agroecology now being mentioned everywhere, it is necessary to question who really are at the center of agroecology. "We are talking about small scale food producers, peasants, fisherfolk, pastoralists, we are who feed the world population. It is we who are the real heroes of the agroecology. It is we that should have a voice", he said.

Participants of the first Agroecology forum have a common understanding that the only way to save the planet for future generations is to practice a virtuous agriculture. Thus, people must stand together as one, and this is possible because "we are the majority. If we say no to industrial agriculture, it will be no!", stressed Coulibaly.

Andrea Ferrante from the Italian Association of Biological Farmers (AIAB) and La Via Campesina reiterated: "We are the answer. The answer to feed the world lies with agroecology. We want a model that is based on our knowledge, our way of living, not on petrol and fake answers from the industrial



Photo credits: La Via Campesina

world. We look at the future of our children". The link between rural and urban actors has also been highlighted through a need to connect responsible consumption and production, in strong local and regional food systems based on agroecology. "It is not possible to have food sovereignty, the respect of peoples right to culturally appropriate and healthy food, without agroecology," said Ferrante.

Source

Communication team of the International Forum On Agroecology

La Via Campesina International Movement at www.viacampesina.org/en/images/mali-agroecology.jpg

3rd African Organic Conference

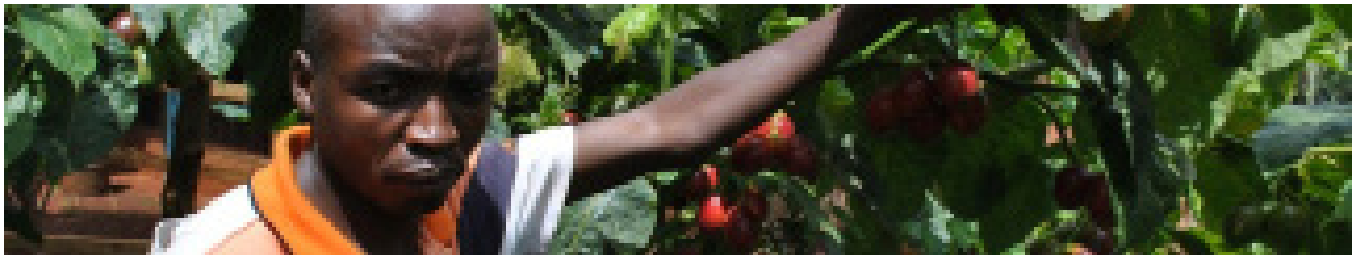


Photo credit: The Ecological Organic Agriculture Initiative for Africa at www.eoa-africa.org

The 3rd African Organic Conference will be held from 5-9 October 2015 in Ibadan, Nigeria. The theme is "Achieving Social and Economic Development through Ecological and Organic Agriculture Alternatives".

Following the great success of the 2nd African Organic Conference held in Lusaka, Zambia, in May 2012, the Third African Organic Conference (3rd AOC) will take place in Nigeria, from October 5 - 9, 2015. The conference aims to showcase the potential of organic agriculture in the context of poverty alleviation, climate change adaptation, food security and trade; facilitate the sharing of knowledge, information, experiences and skills among key stakeholders in the organic sector; explore partnerships and cooperation opportunities for the implementation of the African Ecological Organic Agriculture Action Plan, which aims to mainstream "Ecological Organic Agriculture" into national and continental agricultural production systems in Africa by 2020, and to encourage the uptake of organic alternatives through south-south collaboration, especially in the sharing of experiences.

A first call for papers is out, the submission deadline is March 31, 2015, by submission to <http://www.orgprints.org>.

Source

The Alliance of Ecological Organic Agriculture (EOA) at www.africanorganicnetwork.net